



## Homestay Welfare and Accommodation Policy

### BACKGROUND

The Minister for Education, Training and Youth Affairs has established a National Code of Conduct for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students (The National Code) under the federal Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act 2000. Education providers approving care arrangements for students under 18 years old must:

1. Give the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) a signed statement confirming that appropriate arrangements have been made for the student's accommodation, support and general welfare during their stay in Australia until they turn 18, and
2. Notify the department in writing of any changes to the care arrangements. Additionally, students are required to obtain their educational provider's approval to change these arrangements if they wish to do so after their arrival in Australia.

### PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide written processes to ensure that PMSA Schools and Homestay Hosts arranged by and for PMSA schools comply with *the Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act 2000* and the requirements of Standard 5 of the National Code of Practice 2007 (National Code) for ensuring the suitability of accommodation, support and general welfare for Homestay Students under 18 years of age.

In particular, the purpose of this Policy is to:

- Ensure that the PMSA has in place arrangements to protect the personal safety and wellbeing of Homestay Students and to protect them from harm;
- meet the requirements of Queensland's child protection framework, Migration Act and Regulations and the standards of the ESOS Act regulatory framework outlined in the National Code (established under the *Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act 2000*);
- provide guidelines for the selection of homestay families to ensure that suitable accommodation and a stable environment is provided to Homestay Students throughout the duration of their studies;
- provide guidelines to manage potential risks and duty of care issues associated with activities undertaken outside of school hours by Homestay Students enrolled in PMSA schools.

This policy should be read and understood in conjunction with the following relevant PMSA and School policies:

- [PMSA Abuse Policy](#)
- [PMSA Child Protection Policy](#)
- [PMSA Critical Incident Management Policy](#)



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- PMSA Homestay Risk Management Strategy
- PMSA Working with Children (Blue Card) Policy
- School's Homestay Code of Conduct

All Homestay Programs operated by the PMSA and its schools must meet Queensland legislative requirements under Section 9 of the Education (Overseas Students) Regulation 1998 and the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Act 2000, as well as under Standard 5 of the National Code. These include:

- Continuous dates for approved welfare arrangements
- Documented procedures for checking suitability of accommodation, support and general welfare arrangements
- Guidelines for selecting family and ensuring the family can provide a stable environment for the duration of the student's enrolment at the school
- Criteria about accommodation services to be provided, and contract for arrangements about providing accommodation services
- Orientation program for families new to provision of homestay services
- Blue card obligations for adults living in the homestay other than homestay students
- Compliant Homestay Risk Management Strategy, reviewed annually

### SCOPE

This policy applies to:

- PMSA Schools and staff of the school
- Homestay Hosts
- Residents of Homestay Hosts' homes
- Homestay students
- Visitors to Homestay Residences
- Employees of Homestay Hosts (if they meet a "regular contact" provision)

### DEFINITIONS

The PMSA Child Protection Policy provides the following definitions for Abuse and Sexual Abuse:

**"Abuse"** means the activity or deliberate or careless inactivity which causes significant harm, that is to say, any detrimental effect of a significant nature on a person's physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing. It is immaterial how the harm is caused. The harm can be caused by:

- Physical, psychological or emotional Abuse or neglect
- Sexual Abuse or exploitation



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“**Sexual Abuse**” in relation to a relevant person, includes sexual behaviour involving the relevant person and another person in the following circumstances

- (a) The other person bribes, coerces, exploits, threatens or is violent toward the relevant person;
- (b) The relevant person has less power than the other person;
- (c) There is a significant disparity between the relevant person and the other person in intellectual capacity or maturity.

### PRINCIPLES

PMSA schools will uphold the following principles under this policy:

- PMSA schools believe all Homestay Students have the right to feel safe, be listened to, be involved in decisions that affect them, have their cultural values respected, not be unjustly discriminated against on the basis of their status, activities, expressed opinions or beliefs of their parents or carers, and have their best interests considered.
- Students under the care of PMSA schools should be provided with the knowledge and information they require to feel empowered to take action in the event of abuse or neglect.
- PMSA schools acknowledge that Homestay Students are unique and valued individuals and deserve to be treated with care and respect.
- PMSA schools recognise that respect for Homestay Students is the foundation upon which all PMSA Homestay policies and procedures are developed. PMSA schools are committed to promoting the wellbeing of Homestay Students under their protection by protecting their security, safety and wellbeing.

### RESPONSIBILITIES

Together the PMSA, its schools and Homestay Hosts share responsibility for the welfare of Homestay Students enrolled in PMSA schools.

#### PMSA School

Where a PMSA school has taken on responsibility under the Migration regulations for approving the accommodation, support and general welfare arrangements for a student who has not turned 18, the school must:

- (a) Ensure that each adult occupant (18 years or older, excluding other international students) residing at the Homestay Residence holds a Blue Card in accordance with the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian (CCYPCG) Act 2000.
- (b) Nominate the dates for which the school accepts responsibility for approving the Homestay Student's accommodation, support and general welfare arrangements using the specified School Registration & International Student Management System (PRISMS)
- (c) advise Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) in writing of the approval using specified PRISMS pro forma letter



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- (d) have documented procedures for checking the suitability of the Homestay Student's accommodation, support and general welfare arrangements;
- (e) advise DIAC as soon as possible, using the specified PRISMS pro forma letter, in the event that the Homestay Student has changed his or her living arrangements or the school no longer approves of the arrangements for the student;
- (f) provide Homestay Hosts with a Homestay Agreement (which must be signed and returned to the school) which outlines all terms and conditions, including responsibilities for Homestay Hosts.
- (g) provide Homestay Hosts with a Code of Conduct which must be included in the school's Homestay Handbook
- (h) provide orientation sessions for new Homestay Hosts
- (i) provide training workshops for Homestay Hosts at least on an annual basis
- (j) ensure the PMSA Homestay Risk Management Strategy is publicly available
- (k) comply with the provisions of the Right to Information Act

### Homestay Hosts

All Homestay Hosts arranged by and for PMSA schools must be informed of their responsibilities with regard to placement of Homestay Students under 18 years of age.

The Homestay Host must:

- (a) agree to a Code of Conduct and comply with all PMSA and school's Terms and Conditions and all applicable PMSA and school policies and procedures, as well as relevant legislation and the laws and regulations of the State of Queensland and Australia, and comply with all policies of the school that have been established for the safety of Homestay Students.
- (b) ensure that each adult occupant (18 years or older, excluding other international students) residing at the Homestay Residence holds a Blue Card in accordance with the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian (CCYPCG) Act 2000.
- (c) consent to the CCYPCG providing advice to the school of any changes to the status of a Blue Card held by the Homestay Host.
- (d) obtain approval from the school for any risk activities or events and identify risks related to activities under their supervision
- (e) report all risk situations to relevant School staff
- (f) report, to the school, any harm or reasonable suspicion of harm towards a Homestay student
- (g) participate in orientation and training sessions conducted by the school
- (h) participate in monitoring and reviews of the homestay arrangement
- (i) not host, at the same time, any more than two international students enrolled with any education School.

### Homestay Student

- (a) Each student is expected to abide by the terms and conditions of enrolment and the policies, procedures and code of conduct of the School.
- (b) Obtain the School's approval to change their care arrangements if they wish to do so after their arrival in Australia.



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### RELEVANT LEGISLATION

#### Relevant Legislation

*Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Act 2000 (Qld)*  
*Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Regulation 2001 (Qld)*  
*Education (General Provisions Act) 2006 (Qld)*  
*Education (General Provisions) Regulation 2006 (Qld)*  
*Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Act 2005 (Qld)*  
*Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Act 2001 (Qld)*  
*Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2001(Qld)*  
*Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act 2000 (Cth)*  
*Education (Overseas Students) Act 1996 (Qld)*  
*Education (Overseas Students) Regulation 1998 (Qld)*

### REQUIREMENTS FOR APPROVED WELFARE ARRANGEMENTS

Under the National Code 2007, where students under the age of 18 are not being cared for in Australia by a parent or suitable nominated relative, the PMSA School must ensure that appropriate accommodation, support and general welfare arrangements are in place for the period for which the school takes responsibility for the student.

#### Key requirements under the National Code include:

- The Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) must be satisfied that appropriate welfare arrangements are in place for students under 18 years of age before a visa is granted.
- A parent, a nominated suitable relative or an education provider must be responsible for the welfare of Homestay students under 18 years of age while in Australia.
- Should neither a parent nor a suitable relative be in Australia to directly provide for the welfare of a student, and the PMSA School accepts the student, the school must approve suitable accommodation and welfare arrangements.
- Where the PMSA School approves the arrangement for Homestay students, regardless of whether they are under or over 18 years of age, it must nominate two dates: (1) when the school has elected to begin taking responsibility; and (2) when the school will cease to take responsibility for approving the welfare arrangements for that student.

#### Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE)

- Under Migration Regulations, if a PMSA School is approving the accommodation, support and general welfare arrangements for the Homestay Student, the school must nominate the period for which it will take responsibility for the student. This period must be at least the Confirmation of



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Enrolment (CoE) **plus seven days** in order to satisfy DIAC provisions for appropriate welfare arrangements.

- Schools can **nominate the beginning and end dates of the period for which they are willing to undertake responsibility** for approving accommodation, support and welfare arrangements for students under 18 years old. Previously a School was responsible for approving the arrangements **for the duration of the student's stay** in Australia.
- Schools can indicate non-approval of a student's arrangements for accommodation, support and welfare by using a pro-forma on the School Registration and International Student Management System (PRISMS): '**Non-Approval of Accommodation/Welfare Arrangements**'.

### Confirmation of Appropriate Accommodation and Welfare (CAAW)

The DIAC requires students to have welfare arrangements in place when they apply for a visa. The school must generate a Confirmation of Appropriate Accommodation and Welfare (CAAW) letter through the DIAC's 'School Registration and International Student Management System (PRISMS)', to accompany the Homestay Student's Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE). A CAAW letter cannot be generated without the details of the CoE.

**NB.** If a parent or suitable nominated relative takes responsibility for the welfare arrangements of the student, Standard 5 of the National Code does not apply and schools do not need to complete a Confirmation of Appropriate Accommodation and Welfare (CAAW) letter.

## MANAGING APPROVED ACCOMODATION AND WELFARE ARRANGEMENTS

### School Vacation Periods

For school vacation periods, the following accommodation options should be made available to Homestay Students

- Student returns home to parents
- Student continues to live in Homestay arranged and approved by the school
- Student may attend a supervised excursion, camp, etc., if all requirements are met in order to attain school approval

If the student is planning to go home over a school vacation period, the school may still issue a CAAW letter to cover the period (agreed with the student and his/her family) for which the student will be abroad. This arrangement will mean the student does not need multiple visa applications and would benefit both the student and the school.

### Responsibility after expiry of CAAW letter

The Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) will issue the Homestay Student with a visa according to the dates nominated on the CAAW letter. If the student does not go home, or does not change their visa type, e.g. if their parents visit, they will be in breach of their visa. The school should discuss the



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conditions of the approval of welfare arrangements with the Homestay Student at an appropriate time, but the school is **not** responsible for ensuring that the student leaves the country.

### Extension of Approved Care Arrangements

- A PMSA school is only responsible for approving welfare arrangements for a student for the dates they have nominated on the CAAW letter.
- If the CAAW letter has been issued and the student cannot get a flight within the nominated period, a new CoE and CAAW letter must be issued and the student must apply for a new visa.
- Under the Migration Act, PMSA schools must approve care arrangements for at least seven days after the course end date. A school can **choose to extend** its approved care arrangements, for a Homestay Student, to include periods of approved care at both the beginning and the end of a course.

### Student Absences from Homestay without Notice

Once a PMSA school has nominated dates for which it will approve care arrangements for a Homestay Student, the responsibility to approve arrangements continues throughout that period. The school's agreement with the Homestay Host must include a requirement that the Homestay Host will notify the School in the case of prolonged or unexplained absence, by the Homestay Student, from the Homestay Residence.

### Termination, Cancellation or Suspension of Student Enrolment

Where the school has taken responsibility under the Migration regulations for approving the accommodation, support and general welfare arrangements for a Homestay Student, and the school terminates, suspends or cancels the enrolment of the Homestay Student, the school must continue to check the suitability of arrangements for that student until:

- (a) the student is accepted by another registered School and the registered School takes over responsibility for approving the Homestay Student's accommodation and welfare arrangements
- (b) the student leaves Australia
- (c) the school reports under Standard 5.1 of the National Code that it can no longer approve the arrangements for the student

### Termination of Homestay Host Arrangement

#### Termination by the Homestay Host

- The Homestay Host may withdraw as a Homestay Host by providing 4 weeks written notice to the School.
- The Homestay Host agreement is valid for 12 months, with a possibility of 12 months extension. At the end of this period, the Homestay Host is required to reapply to the school.

#### Termination by the School or PMSA

The school or the PMSA may revoke the Homestay Host's status as an authorized PMSA Homestay Host:





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- if there is a serious incident, complaint or emergency involving the student, immediately by providing the Homestay Host with notice to that effect, and also removing the student from the Homestay Residence; or
- in any other case, by providing the Homestay Host with 2 week's notice, or as otherwise mutually agreed between the school and the Homestay Host.

### Requests to Change Agreed Arrangements

All Homestay Students are required to notify the School of a change of address while enrolled in the course, and students who live in school approved accommodation must not change agreed arrangements without prior approval of the School. If there is a change in a student's care arrangements under section (3) 5.1.d of the National Code, the School must inform DIAC.

When a PMSA school has taken responsibility for approving arrangements for student care and welfare, should the School not approve requests for changes to agreed arrangements, and the student refuses to maintain the approved and agreed arrangements, the School must notify the DIAC and the student that they are no longer able to approve the student's welfare. This must be reported to DIAC via the pro forma letter in PRISMS. This will be a breach of the student's visa and the student may have their visa cancelled and be subject to a three year exclusion period. DIAC will contact the student directly to ensure visa implications are understood.

### Gaps in Welfare Arrangements

If a PMSA school accepts responsibility for approving accommodation arrangements for a student under 18 years old, the student's visa is granted on the basis that suitable accommodation arrangements are in place for the period nominated by the school. This means that the school has an obligation to the student to continue to approve arrangements for the period it has nominated.

If, after reasonable efforts to find suitable accommodation arrangements, a student under-18 years old is left with a 'gap' period in care arrangements, the school must report this through PRISMS, using the 'Non-Approval of Accommodation/Welfare Arrangements' letter. As this letter indicates a breach of student visa condition 8532 ('must maintain care arrangements') DIAC may cancel the student's visa.

If a student is unable to make alternative arrangements of which the school could approve, the student would be best advised to voluntarily return to the student's home country for the 'gap' period, in order to avoid breaching visa condition 8532.

## **GUIDELINES FOR SELECTING AND SCREENING HOMESTAY HOSTS**

### Selection

In choosing a Homestay Host the school must comply with any relevant legislation and satisfy itself of the ability of the Homestay Host to care for the student in a safe and secure environment, and to provide age appropriate support and supervision for a child or adolescent attending school and adjusting to living in a new environment.





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PMSA schools must ensure that the Homestay Hosts they approve are:

- (a) At least 21 years old
- (b) Of good character, **and**
- (c) Have permission to reside in Australia until the student turns 18 or their visa expires

NB: older siblings aged less than 21 years old are generally not considered to be appropriate carers.

Each PMSA school should implement a general policy to select Homestay Hosts known to them, such as parents of the school or members of the school community and those families already established as homestay hosts for other reputable organisations within the wider local area.

In selecting a Homestay Host, each PMSA school must ensure:

- Host families are carefully selected from within the school community (where possible).
- All Host families have undergone a police check as required by Queensland law.
- Host families are interviewed and assessed by a trained School-based Homestay Coordinator.
- Host families receive a comprehensive Homestay information pack, including a Homestay Handbook, to ensure their visiting student has a fulfilling Homestay experience.
- Host families can provide visiting students with suitable accommodation and a stable environment for the duration of their stay.
- Host families are aware of, and can effectively manage potential risks associated with activities undertaken by visiting students.
- Host families agree to provide assistance to access appropriate transport to and from school and related school activities.
- Host families agree to the school's Homestay Code of Conduct and the School's and PMSA's Child Protection Policy

The following questions may be useful, as part of a Homestay Family Application, in assisting school Homestay Coordinators in the process of selecting Homestay Hosts in their aim of providing a Homestay Student with a stable environment for the duration of the registered course, conducted by the School.

- Ascertain who else will be living in the Homestay Residence (e.g. other children, grandparents etc.)
- Determine the family's past experience with travelling overseas or hosting overseas students/visitors previously
- Ascertain whether there are any current international students with the family. Gender/ Nationality/ Age/Duration/School or College they attend
- Establish if there will be times when the student is likely to be home alone, and if so when might this be and for how long and who would be the nearest adult the student could contact in this case.
- Establish whether the student will be able to attend after school activities, weekend sports fixtures, or a place of worship of their choice, if requested?
- Obtain emergency contact details for the homestay family that the student can use in their absence.
- Establish transportation situation – by family car or bus. If bus, establish bus route and times and cost of bus journey. Note location to public transport/shops/sports clubs.



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- Determine family hobbies, interests, sports and other leisure activities and question whether student may join in /is expected to join in these activities.
- Establish whether there are pets in the home and if so, whether they are outdoor or indoor pets.
- Establish whether they currently have any plans to move or renovate in the near future

### Screening

#### Child Protection and Blue Cards

Where students are being accommodated in Homestay, the school must ensure that:

- (a) the Homestay hosts, both in business or as volunteers (including parents of the school, but excluding those who are relatives of the child staying with them), have positive prescribed notices (Blue Cards)
- (b) paid employees of a Homestay Host hold a Blue Card if they meet a "regular contact" provision
- (c) adults other than the designated Homestay Host, who reside permanently with the Homestay Hosts, hold a Blue Card.

NB: there is a frequency test for volunteer Homestay or billeting parents which allows a person to provide Homestay and/or billeting for ten days in a year without requiring a Blue Card, provided that the service is not provided on more than two occasions in one year.

Regular contact provision applies to paid employees who work:

- Eight consecutive days; or
- Once a week, each week, over four weeks; or
- Once a fortnight, each fortnight, over eight weeks; or
- Once a month, each month, over six months.

As part of the homestay application and selection process all Homestay Hosts (including parents of the school, but excluding those who are relatives of the child staying with them) must have positive prescribed notices (Blue Cards) issued by the Queensland Department of Families under the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Act 2000 **except** when:

- the 'employment' is arranged by the school; **and**
- the employee performs the function as a volunteer; **and**
- the employee performs the function for 10 days or less; **and**
- the employee does not perform the function on more than two occasions in the same year.

Adults other than the designated Homestay Host who live permanently with the Homestay Host must hold a Blue Card; screening of such adults is to be carried out free of charge.

Where students are in boarding accommodation, the school must ensure that the boarding staff who are not registered teachers carrying out their duty as part of their role as registered teachers of the school, have Blue Cards.



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Each PMSA school must maintain a register of all Blue Card numbers of people in the above categories and the dates of expiry. At each PMSA school, audits of their registers are conducted annually by the PMSA.

A Homestay Host for a school Homestay Service arranged by and for a PMSA school must be aware of and comply with the [PMSA Child Protection Policy](#) with regard to procedures for reporting of harm, such that if a Homestay Host becomes aware or suspects that harm has been caused by anyone to a student of the school who was under 18 at the time, the Homestay Host should report it to the Principal either directly or via the Homestay Coordinator, and keep a written record of the actions.

### INDUCTION

All new Homestay Hosts arranged by and for PMSA Schools, must be provided with an induction program. The school's induction program should introduce new Homestay Hosts not only to the administrative requirements of the Homestay Program, but also give them an understanding of the Program's aims and objectives, and provide practical advice, information and support to assist in achieving these aims and objectives.

Components of a school's induction program for new Homestay Hosts must include, as a minimum, making Homestay Hosts aware of the following:

- The PMSA and school's commitment to providing environments which are safe, caring and supportive to children and young people.
- The PMSA and school's policies and procedures relating to the protection from harm of students in homestay arrangements.
- Procedures to follow when harm is disclosed or suspected
- Their rights and responsibilities
- What is expected of them
- What they can and can't do – the boundaries of their roles
- The roles of the key people in the school/PMSA and to whom the Homestay Host should report or go for help
- What to expect if there is an allegation of harm made against them or to them
- Reporting and grievance procedures

### HOMESTAY HANDBOOK

All Host families must be provided with a comprehensive Homestay information pack, including a Homestay Handbook, to ensure their visiting students have a fulfilling homestay experience. The Homestay Handbook must set out clear criteria, for the Homestay Host, with regard to how it makes decisions about the suitability of a homestay situation. These criteria must cover the minimum requirements with regard to:

- Working With Children "Blue Card" requirements
- Facilities and infrastructure
- Hygiene
- Cultural awareness



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- School and Homestay rules
- Services provided (e.g. meals, laundry)

In addition to the Handbook, the Homestay information pack should include:

- an Introductory Letter to Homestay Host
- an Application to provide Homestay Accommodation
- an Agreement for Homestay Accommodation
- instructions on how to apply for a Working With Children check
- the School's Child Protection Policy
- the PMSA's Student Welfare and Accommodation Policy
- the school's Homestay Code of Conduct

### HOMESTAY CODE OF CONDUCT

PMSA schools must ensure that a Homestay Code of Conduct is included in the School Homestay Agreement Form and Homestay Handbook. The Code of Conduct should, as a minimum, include standards of conduct within the homestay arrangement, relating to:

- Language
- Physical Contact
- Discipline
- Behaviour
- Personal Appearance

The Homestay Host must agree to observe, and ensure that all persons to whom the Code of Conduct applies observe, the required standards of conduct towards the Homestay Student.

### Breaches of the Code of Conduct

Any breach of the school's Homestay Code of Conduct must be reported to the School Homestay Coordinator as soon as reasonably practicable and, in the case of any incident involving harm of a physical or sexual nature to the Homestay Student, to the Principal in accordance with the [PMSA Child Protection Policy](#).

The Homestay Host must be aware of, and accept that any breach of the school's Homestay Code of Conduct, including any failure to report a breach of the Code of Conduct may result in:

- removal of the Homestay Student from the Homestay Residence and the control of the Homestay Host;
- termination of the Homestay Host's participation in the Homestay Program;
- the Homestay Host being reported to appropriate authorities; or
- possible criminal prosecution.



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### ACCOMMODATION ARRANGEMENTS

The PMSA School must assess and approve the suitability of a Homestay Host's accommodation in line with the provisions contained in the Conformation of Appropriate Accommodation & Welfare (CAAW) and the National Code.

The School must also monitor the ongoing accommodation arrangements and the welfare of Homestay Students to ensure that the students are placed in appropriate care and are protected from possible exploitation and abuse and to maximise their success whilst living and studying in Australia. The arrangements which a School puts in place should be comparable with arrangements appropriate for domestic students of the same age.

For a school to approve the accommodation, support and general welfare arrangements provided by Homestay Hosts, arranged by and for PMSA schools, the school must be satisfied that the Homestay Host is able to provide the student with the appropriate accommodation and living assistance, including:

- full board in a clean, tidy household that has been approved as the Homestay Residence.
- a safe, secure, private bedroom with suitable storage space for clothes, personal effects and study materials.
- suitable facilities for study including a desk, a chair and adequate lighting.
- three meals daily ensuring adequate nutritious food and reasonable access to other appropriate food as may be requested.
- access to bathroom and laundry facilities.
- access to a landline telephone (or suitable alternative) in the Homestay Residence.
- access to household items, such as towels, sheets, blankets and eating/cooking utensils.

### SUPERVISION AND CARE OUTSIDE SCHOOL HOURS

In approving accommodation, support and general welfare arrangements provided by Homestay Hosts arranged by and for PMSA schools, the school must be satisfied that the Homestay Host will:

- ensure that the student is appropriately supervised at all times throughout the duration of the Homestay including by:
  - maintaining suitable supervision of the student outside of school hours.
  - monitoring the student's general welfare including by reference to the student's social activities.
  - confirming with the student and the School Homestay Coordinator where necessary, that appropriate approval has been obtained by the student prior to the student participating in travel and activities.
- notify the school if the Homestay Host is temporarily unable to provide accommodation for, or supervision of, the student.



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### MONITORING

Monitoring of the service provided by host families must be conducted by the School, through the Homestay Coordinator and must include but not be limited to:

- Conducting periodic surveys of Homestay Students which includes an evaluation of their accommodation and welfare arrangements and taking action as required
- Regular contact with the Homestay Host by phone and/or email to discuss and review the arrangement
- Conducting informal meetings with Homestay Students and pastoral care meetings to monitor adjustment; at a minimum once per study period
- Where appropriate, liaise with teachers of Homestay Students
- Where appropriate, undertake occasional visits to the Homestay Residence to check on the wellbeing and safety of students
- School's Complaints Register
- Self-assessment by Homestay Hosts
- Exit statements by Homestay Students and Hosts

### RISK MANAGEMENT

All PMSA schools are expected to exercise a duty of care and approve arrangements that are appropriate for the age and capability of the Homestay Student. Good practice guidelines for schools would be to apply the same arrangements that are appropriate for domestic students of a similar age and apply some extra precautions, e.g. a buddy system if there's a chance that the student could become confused or lost.

To ensure effective identification and management of risks relating to students accommodated in Homestay arrangements, schools must:

- Have an established risk register which identifies and evaluates risks involved with the accommodation, support and general welfare of a student accommodated in homestay arrangements, and an established process for developing strategies to minimise the impact of these risks (e.g. risks associated with pre departure, post arrival and departure activities).
- Ensure that all potential risks to Homestay Students are included as part of the standard risk management processes applied by the school when developing risk management plans for high risk and special events in which students, including Homestay Students, may participate. (e.g. sporting carnivals, school excursions and camps).
- Educate Homestay Hosts to identify, assess and control risks relating to the Homestay Student's activities under their supervision, and to ensure child protection issues are addressed as part of the standard risk management processes in the Homestay arrangement (e.g. supervision of the student during the Homestay, including outside of school hours, and risks associated with the student's general welfare including social activities and travel).



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- Have an established Risk Management Committee with the role of identifying risks to students of the school, including those who are accommodated in Homestay arrangements and all Homestay Hosts must be required to report risk situations to the school's Committee, via the School Homestay Coordinator or Principal.

The risk management approach implemented by all PMSA schools must be consistent with the framework set out in the *PMSA Enterprise Risk Management Policy*.

### Homestay Risk Management Strategy

The PMSA has in place a Homestay Risk Management Strategy which must be directed, by the School, to the attention of all Homestay Hosts through the Homestay Handbook, and in particular, during the induction process for all new Homestay Hosts. The Homestay Risk Management Strategy must also be made publicly available on the school's website.

## CRITICAL INCIDENTS

A critical incident involving a Homestay Student will be managed by the school in accordance with the PMSA and school's *Critical Incident Management Policy*.

## DEFERMENT, SUSPENSION OR CANCELLATION OF STUDY DURING ENROLMENT

A PMSA School must only enable Homestay Students to defer or temporarily suspend their studies, including granting a leave of absence, during a course through formal agreement on the following grounds:

- (a) compassionate or compelling circumstances
- (b) misbehaviour of the student

In the event of deferment, suspension or cancellation of a Homestay Student's studies schools must:

- Have documented procedures for assessing, approving and recording a deferment of the commencement of study or suspension of study for the student, including keeping documentary evidence on the student's file of the assessment of the application.
- Inform the Homestay Students prior to enrolment of the grounds on which their enrolment may be deferred, suspended or cancelled.
- Inform the student that deferment, suspension or cancellation of enrolment may affect his or her student visa.
- Notify the student of its intention to suspend or cancel his or her enrolment and allow the student 20 working days to access the School's internal complaints and appeals process, unless extenuating circumstances relating to the welfare of the student apply.





## Homestay Welfare and Accommodation Policy

- Allow the student access to the School's Complaints and Appeals process and must not notify DIAC of a change to the enrolment status until the internal complaints and appeals process is completed.

### COMPLAINTS, GRIEVANCES AND APPEALS

Under Standard 8 of the National Code, all PMSA Schools must have an Internal Complaints Handling and Grievance Process for Homestay Students that is independent, easily and immediately accessible and inexpensive for the parties involved and includes access to an independent external body if necessary. The school's Complaint and Grievance Procedures must be based on the following principles:

- complaints and grievances will be heard, by the school, as quickly as possible
- complaints and grievances will be treated seriously, sensitively and impartially
- complaints and grievance procedures and guidelines will be based on the principles of Natural Justice
- individuals will be encouraged to use these procedures, and can be confident that there will be no negative consequences from doing so
- confidentiality will be strictly observed by all participants and at all stages of the Complaints and Grievance Process.

Schools must have in place a process for managing internal complaints and grievances that:

- requires a written record if the complaint or appeal cannot be resolved informally;
- provides a Homestay Student with the opportunity to formally present his or her case at minimal or no cost;
- allows the student to be assisted or accompanied by a support person;
- provides a written statement of the outcome, including details and reasons for the decision;
- ensures that processes begin within 10 working days of the School receiving the formal written lodgement of the complaint or appeal;
- provides access to an independent external person or organisation to hear the complaints or appeals where the School's internal process has been completed and the student remains dissatisfied;
- allows for the Homestay Student's enrolment to be maintained while the Complaints and Appeals Process is ongoing. This does not necessarily mean that a student must remain in class.

If the outcome of a Homestay Student's appeal through a School's internal or external Complaints and Grievance Process is favourable to the student, the School must immediately advise the student of this and implement any decision and/or corrective and preventative action required.

The availability of the Complaints and Grievance Process, does not remove the right of the Student or the Parents to take action under Australia's consumer protection laws.

### Complaints and Grievances Not Covered Under This Policy



## Homestay Welfare and Accommodation Policy

- Any complaint relating to harm or potential harm of a Homestay Student must be dealt with by the school under the PMSA's Child Protection Policy.
- Grievances brought by a student against another student will be dealt with under the School's Behaviour Management Policy/Code of Conduct.
- Grievances arising from the School's suspension or cancellation of a student's studies will be dealt with under the School's Deferment, Suspension and Cancellation Policy.

### PRIVACY STATEMENT

Personal information of any Homestay Student or Homestay Host is subject to the Privacy Act which prohibits the disclosure of any personal information or details. PMSA Schools must ensure that all personal information, as defined in the Privacy Act, is obtained, stored and released in accordance with the Privacy Act.

Issue No	Date of Issue	Page No	Details of and reason for amendment
01	20/05/2013	All	Adopted by PMSA Council